

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 15824

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NESCO

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNESCO,US

SUBJECT: UNESCO: ASSISTANT SECRETARY BUFFUM MEETING
WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL M'BOW

1. SUMMARY: A STRAIGHTFORWARD AND FRIENDLY DISCUSSION OF THE US RELATIONSHIP WITH UNESCO AND RELATED UNESCO-ISRAELI PROBLEMS ON JUNE 17 BETWEEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY BUFFUM AND DG M'BOW WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY (A) M'BOW'S VIEW THAT THE 19TH GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 1976 WOULD IN ALL LIKELIHOOD ACCORD ISRAEL MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNESCO EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP, BUT THAT PASSAGE OF A RESOLUTION BY THE 98TH EXECUTIVE BOARD THIS FALL IMPLICITLY RECOMMENDING ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP WAS POSSIBLE IF THE US TOOK THE NECESSARY PREPARATORY STEPS THROUGH CAPITALS OF EXBD MEMBER GOVERNMENTS; ESPECIALLY THE FRENCH AND OTHER EUROPEANS; (B) M'BOW'S AGREEMENT TO CONSIDER INVITING ISRAEL TO SEND AN EXPERT TO HELSINKI MEETING ON A DIPLOMA EQUIVALENCY CONVENTION, PROVIDED HE COULD BE ASSURED THE ISRAELIS WOULD ACCEPT; AND (C) M'BOW'S ADVISING OF THE DISPATCHING OF A TWO-MAN SECRETARIAT TEAM, DUE NON-AVAILABILITY OF BELGIAN EXPERT LEMAIRE, TO JERUSALEM ON JULY 5 TO DISCUSS UNESCO-ISRAELI PROBLEMS WITH
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PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE EXCAVATIONS QUESTION, AS WELL

AS TOPIC OF EDUCATION IN OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES. NOTABLY, M'BOW ADVISED OF RECENT INFORMATION THAT GOI MAY SOON END DIGS IN THE ARAB QUARTER. M'BOW FURTHER ADVISED, IN RESPONSE TO CONFIRMATION THAT US WOULD NOT PAY ITS CONTRIBUTION, THAT ACCORDINGLY HE WOULD BEGIN IN JULY TO SOLICIT NON-INTEREST BEARING LOANS FROM ALL OTHER MEMBER STATES. END SUMMARY.

2. AN HOUR-LONG FRIENDLY AND STRAIGHTFORWARD DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT UNESCO-GOI-US IMPASSE BETWEEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, WILLIAM B. BUFFUM, AND DG M'BOW, INCLUDING PERMREP JONES AND DELOFF MAXIM, WAS CHARACTERIZED BY M'BOW'S UNDERSTANDING OF US PROBLEMS AND HIS INDICATION THAT HE WILLING TO CONTINUE A CONCILIATORY APPROACH TOWARDS GOI, AS URGED BY THE US, DESPITE GOI'S BASICALLY UNCOMPROMISING STANCE. M'BOW NOTED HE TOLD THE GOI'S MRS. LAMBERT IN A PRIVATE DISCUSSION HELD AT HIS INVITATION THREE WEEKS AGO THAT, WHILE ISRAEL HAD INDEED BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST DURING THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, CAMPAIGNS OF PRESS CRITICISM AGAINST UNESCO WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT IN CHANGING THE POLICIES OF MEMBER STATE GOVERNMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE DECISIONS.

3. ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP IN UNESCO EUROPEAN REGIONAL ACTIVITY GROUP. M'BOW INDICATED THAT ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP WOULD LIKELY BE ACCORDED AT THE 19TH GENERAL CONFERENCE; IN PARTICULAR BECAUSE LANGUAGE OF THE 18TH GENERAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTION 46.1 (A) FORMALLY RECOGNIZED "THE RIGHT AND DUTY" OF EVERY MEMBER STATE TO PARTICIPATE IN UNESCO REGIONAL ACTIVITIES; AND (B) SPECIFICALLY PROVIDED FOR THE 19TH GENERAL CONFERENCE TO "EXAMINE" THE QUESTION OF STATES NOT YET ACCORDED REGIONAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP, I.E. ISRAEL ALONE. QUESTIONED BY BUFFUM AND JONES AS TO PROSPECTS FOR PASSAGE OF A RESOLUTION IMPLICITLY RECOMMENDING ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPEAN GROUP AT THIS FALL'S BOARD SESSION, M'BOW RESPONDED THIS WAS POSSIBLE BUT EMPHASIZED THAT CAREFUL ADVANCE PREPARATION BY THE US

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THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS IN ALL OF THE CAPITALS OF THE 40 MEMBER STATES WHO HAVE BOARD MEMBERS WOULD BE ESSENTIAL. M'BOW STRESSED IN PARTICULAR THE IMPORTANCE OF SECURING THE SUPPORT OF EUROPEAN BOARD MEMBERS AND ESPECIALLY FRANCE. M'BOW FELT, AND

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NOTED RECENTLY HE HAD SO STRESSED TO THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO UNESCO, THAT FRANCE'S PRE-GENERAL CONFERENCE LOBBYING LAST YEAR AGAINST US, CANADIAN AND ISRAELI ADMITTANCE TO THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP FOLLOWED BY GOF PUBLIC CRITICISM OF UNESCO IN THE WAKE OF THE 18TH GC DECISION AGAINST ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP HAD NOT BEEN "RESPONSIBLE" AND WAS CONTRADICTORY. M'BOW SAID THAT HIS READING OF ARAB MEMBER STATE OPINION WAS THAT ARABS HAD FOUGHT AND LOBBIED AGAINST ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP AT THE 18TH GENERAL CONFERENCE AS AN ANTI-ISRAELI REFLEX, BUT THAT THIS ISSUE WAS NO LONGER OF EMOTIONAL OR SUBSTANTIVE INTEREST TO THEM. HE NOTED IN PARTICULAR THAT ARAB BOARD MEMBERS (FROM EGYPT, TUNISIA, SYRIA AND MAURITANIA) WERE "MODERATE." DISCUSSION ON THIS POINT WAS CONCLUDED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT THAT US WOULD, IN CONTEXT OF ACTIVIST POLICY OF EXPLORING ALL MEANS TO SOLVE THE UNESCO CRISIS, FOCUS SPECIAL EFFORTS ON THE PASSAGE OF A RESOLUTION IMPLICITLY FAVORABLE TO ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN GROUP BY THE 98TH EXBD SESSION.

4. HELSINKI EXPERTS MEETING FOR THE PREPARATION OF A EUROPEAN DIPLOMA EQUIVALENCY CONVENTION -- BUFFUM RAISED THE QUESTION OF M'BOW TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO INVITE THE ISRAELIS TO THE HELSINKI EXPERTS MEETING THIS OCTOBER. M'BOW RESPONDED THAT FROM HIS STAND-POINT THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE
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HITHERTO REJECTED INITIATIVES HE HAS UNDERTAKEN DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO RESTORE A UNESCO-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP. FOR EXAMPLE, MOST RECENTLY (MAY 16) THE ISRAELIS DID NOT RESPOND TO AN INVITATION TO ATTEND A MEETING THIS JULY IN CANADA OF 27 NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO; AN INVITATION THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD URGED THE CANADIANS TO EXTEND. MRS. LAMBERT, GOI REPRESENTATIVE WHO ATTENDED THIS PAST EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION, TOLD M'BOW THAT GOI HAD REFUSED BECAUSE MAKEUP OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSIONS PRESENT WAS CONSIDERED TOO HOSTILE AND GOI FEARED BEING PUBLICLY ATTACKED. HOWEVER, M'BOW SAID THAT HE WOULD "STUDY" SERIOUSLY INVITING THE ISRAELIS TO THE HELSINKI MEETING PROVIDED -- AND THIS HE STRESSED SEVERAL TIMES -- HE COULD BE "ASSURED" THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL NOT REFUSE AND THEN PROMPT PRESS CRITICISM OF UNESCO BECAUSE ISRAEL WAS NOT INCLUDED. DISCUSSION OF THIS POINT WAS TERMINATED INCONCLUSIVELY BUT IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT FURTHER CONTACT BY THE ISRAELIS AND/OR THE US WITH M'BOW WILL BE NECESSARY TO ADVISE HIM OF ISRAELI RECEPTIVENESS.

5. JERUSALEM EXCAVATIONS SANCTIONS -- IN THE SAME DISCUSSION WITH THE GOI'S MRS. LAMBERT, M'BOW WAS TOLD THAT BELGIAN ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPERT LEMAIRE COULD AGAIN VISIT JERUSALEM PROVIDED THERE WAS NO REFERENCE OR TYING OF THE VISIT TO THE 18TH GC RESOLUTION 3.427 CUTTING OFF UNESCO ASSISTANCE UNTIL THE ISRAELIS HAD COMPLIED WITH THIS AND PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS CONDEMNATORY OF THE EXCAVATIONS. UNFORTUNATELY LEMAIRE HAS A COMMITMENT IN INDONESIA (THE BOROBUDUR MONUMENTS) BUT M'BOW IS SENDING GERARD BOLLA (SWISS, DIRECTOR OF UNESCO CULTURAL HERITAGE DEPT.) AND WILLIAM CONTON (SIERRA LEONE, DIRECTOR, UNESCO EQUALITY OF EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY DIV.) TO JERUSALEM ON JULY 5 TO DISCUSS WITH GOI THE ENTIRE RANGE OF PROBLEMS WITH UNESCO. M'BOW SPECULATED THAT BOLLA MIGHT RETURN WITH INFORMATION THAT MIGHT BE REPORTED TO UNESCO MEMBER STATES AS REFLECTING A MORE CONICLIATORY ISRAELI STANCE ON THE EXCAVATIONS ISSUE.

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6. MOST INTERESTINGLY, M'BOW SAID THAT HE HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT THE GOI MAY SOON HALT EXCAVATIONS IN THE ARAB QUARTER, LIKELY BECAUSE WORK WAS NEARLY COMPLETED, ALTHOUGH DIGS WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE IN THE JEWISH QUARTER.

7. CONTON IS DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNRWA EXAMINATIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND THEREFORE BE MAKING A REPORT THAT HOPEFULLY WOULD MITIGATE 18 GC RESOLUTION 13.1 THAT CRITICIZED ISRAEL ACTIONS RE RIGHTS OF POPULATIONS IN OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES TO EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL LIFE. M'BOW NOTED THAT MRS. LAMBERT HAD SPECIFIED SIMPLE NOTIFICATION OF GOI OF BOLLA-CONTON MISSION AS PREFERABLE TO MORE FORMAL LETTER SPECIFICALLY ASKING ISRAELI AGREEMENT TO VISIT. M'BOW STRESSED THAT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR BOLLA-CONTON MISSION ARE HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL AND REQUESTED US HOLD THIS INFORMATION CLOSELY.

8. US CONTRIBUTION TO UNESCO - BUFFUM TOLD M'BOW THAT THE US WOULD NOT PAY ITS CONTRIBUTION FOR 1975 IN THE ABSENCE OF CORRECTIVE STEPS, WHICH THE PRESIDENT MUST CERTIFY TO THE CONGRESS AS HAVING BEEN TAKEN, REGARDING THE 18TH GENERAL CONFERENCE DECISIONS. EMPHASIZING THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF MAKING ANY FIRM ASSESSMENT AT PRESENT, BUFFUM INDICATED THERE WAS A VERY SLIGHT CHANCE THAT EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION THIS FALL ON THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP ISSUE PERHAPS TOGETHER WITH OTHER MOVES
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MIGHT HAVE SUFFICIENTLY FAVORABLE IMPACT ON CONGRESSIONAL OPINION TO PERMIT PAYMENT. M'BOW EXPRESSED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING US PAYMENT AND ADVISED THAT IN EARLY JULY HE WOULD SOLICIT NO-INTEREST LOANS FROM OTHER MEMBER STATES TO COMPENSATE FOR THE

LACK OF THE US CONTRIBUTION.

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